

PEACE CORPS SAMOA

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PEACE CORPS CELEBRATES ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A CONTEST DOCUMENTING IMPACTS OF SAMOA PROGRAM IN THE LAST 44 YEARS

To commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the U.S. Peace Corps worldwide and 44 years in Samoa, Peace Corps Samoa today announced a contest focusing on documenting the positive personal and professional impacts of the experience on Volunteers and Samoans.

“Peace Corps Volunteers and their Samoan host families, friends and colleagues have so many wonderful stories about how their shared experience has been such a very important part of their lives,” said Her Highness, Masiofa Filifilia Tamasese, who is the Patron of the organization’s 50th Anniversary event in Samoa. “Gathering and commemorating these stories on the positive impacts of the Peace Corps program on Americans and Samoans will be both a lot of fun and very rewarding.”

She noted that the impacts have been both professional and personal. “Many Samoans in high positions today in the government and private sector will tell you that a Volunteer, often one of their teachers, played a very large role in their academic success, which of course, later led to professional success,” said Her Highness. “Many Volunteers also either initiated their careers here or succeeded in some endeavor that not only was a great benefit to Samoa but also helped propel their careers.

“And of course, the close personal bonds between Volunteers and their Samoan host families here often have stood the test of time,” said Her Highness, “with many instances of support and assistance being exchanged long after the Volunteers left Samoa’s shores.”

Her Highness also talked about the importance of the cross-cultural goals of Peace Corps. “Samoans learned more about Americans by living and working with them, and the Volunteers learned about Samoan culture, which made a lasting impact on them.”

Dale Withington, the current Peace Corps Country Director, added that Volunteers often tell stories about how living in Samoa for 27 months of service affects their character in many ways. “Many say they come away with a new or renewed appreciation of the importance of family ties, generosity and sharing, and also they joke about how they are much more patient and easy going about things than they used to be.”

Robin Yeager, the Charge of the U.S. Embassy Office in Samoa, explained the details of the contest, which she said will culminate in the July 4th celebration at the U.S. Embassy’s new official residence in Apia. “Between now and May 20, we’ll be asking people to turn in material that describes in some way how being a Peace Corps Volunteer in Samoa, or how living or working with a Volunteer, contributed to their personal and professional development.”

She said the contest will have the following categories:

- Top 3 written material (true stories, essays, poem, etc. of 500 words or less) for Volunteers
- Top 3 pieces of art (drawings, photographs, etc.) for Volunteers
- Top 3 written material by Samoans older than 21 years of age.
- Top 3 written material by Samoans 20 years old or younger
- Top 3 pieces of art by Samoans older than 21 years of age
- Top 3 pieces of art by Samoans 20 years old or younger

Ms. Yeager said entries will be judged by a panel of Samoans and former Volunteers.

Prizes will include award certificates, a copy of a small publication with the winning and other entries in the contest, and for the Samoan winners, an invitation to the July 4th Reception at the Official Residence of the U.S. Embassy in Vailima. "Peace Corps Volunteers are such a vital part of the public diplomacy of the U.S. Government that I am very pleased to make them and the Samoans with whom they have inter-acted the focus of the U.S. Independence Day celebrations in Samoa," said Ms. Yeager. "We also hope that former Volunteers, particularly the contest winners, will be able to attend."

The application deadline for all material is Friday, 20 May. All materials can be delivered in one of the following ways:

1. Sent via the mail to Peace Corps Samoa, Private Bag, Apia, Samoa.
2. Sent via email to: cd@ws.peacecorps.gov
3. Dropped off at the Peace Corps Samoa Office at the front of the Pasefika Hotel in Apia.

Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans have served in 139 countries. Since Peace Corps arrived in Samoa in 1967, more than 1600 Volunteers have served in the country.

For More Information, Contact:

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